

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Earl Blumenauer released the following statement on the first meeting of Surface Transportation Conference Committee:

“Today, I had the opportunity to sit down with my colleagues from both chambers of congress to discuss the future of surface transportation investment. Renewing and rebuilding America should be one of our very top priorities as our infrastructure continues to deteriorate, congestion costs Americans more than \$85 billion a year, and we collectively spend 4.2 billion hours a year stuck in traffic.

“This bill should not be a vehicle to attach political projects and poison pills designed to divide us, such as the Keystone pipeline or a provision blocking the EPA from protecting public health by regulating coal ash. Instead, it should be about putting tens of thousands of our fellow citizens back to work. The transportation bill *is* a jobs bill.

“I hope that as the conference committee moves forward it can address issues such as preserving funding for bike lanes and pedestrian walkways, keeping the Senate-passed NEPA provisions and ‘Fix-It-First’ language, and encouraging transportation infrastructure companies to invest in American businesses with the ‘Buy America’ language. Furthermore, I strongly support efforts to ensure transit parity so that all commuting modes are treated equally.

“This conference is an opportunity to adopt many of the provisions from the Senate bill that passed with broad, bipartisan support, and I am excited to continue working with the conference committee to make that happen.”